

MESSAGE FROM FIRE CHIEF DARYL L. OSBY

June 2016



Los Angeles County has a long history of devastating wildland fires. This month, firefighters and residents alike were continually reminded of the potentially devastating effects of wildland fires.

This month, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, along with its firefighting partners, successfully battled the Old Fire in Calabasas, the San Gabriel Complex Fire in Duarte and Azusa, and the Fruitland commercial structure fire in Maywood.

We know this is just the beginning of a long, arduous fire season, but I am thankful for the unwavering commitment and willingness of everyone involved—our dedicated and hard-working firefighters, mechanics, chief officers, dispatchers and staff, along with our first responder partners and communities. Thank you all for working long and hard to protect our residents and their properties.

June has been a month of service and collaboration. We updated residents on the 2016 fire season and the importance of being prepared, marked the one-year anniversary of the Camp 17 Hybrid Fire Camp and announced the official recognition of the Los Angeles County Fire Department Foundation by the Board of Supervisors.

THE SUMMER FIRE FORECAST

On June 13, I was joined by top officials from other fire agencies to share the forecast on the 2016 fire season during our annual news conference.

The news conference is part of the yearly Region 1 and 6 meeting, where chief officers and representatives of various fire agencies gather to discuss current and predicted fire conditions, available resources and mutual aid response. The U.S. Forest Service; CAL FIRE; California Office of Emergency Services; Orange County Fire Authority; and Los Angeles County, Los Angeles City, San Bernardino County, Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, San Luis Obispo and Riverside fire departments, among others, were represented.

CAL FIRE estimates that since Jan. 1, 1,900 fires throughout California have scorched over 35,000 acres—unusually high numbers for this time of year. If the Old and San Gabriel Complex fires are indicative of what summer brings, it will be an extremely challenging and busy firefighting season for us all.

Residents must be prepared for wildfires. The ongoing drought, soaring temperatures, dry fuel and volatile fire behavior pose a major threat to our communities, homes and lives.

Resource readiness and capability, as well as cooperation, communication and community preparation, are all critical to the survival of residents living in the wildland urban interface. It is imperative for homeowners to prepare their families and properties for wildfires, not only by clearing away brush, but also by having a plan in place. I urge residents to utilize the *Ready! Set! Go!* Personal Wildfire Action Plan, which can be found at local fire stations and on our website at www.fire.lacounty.gov.

Preparation and prevention go hand-in-hand, and the Department reaffirms its pledge to respond to early and elevated threats by:

- Moving equipment to strategic locations closer to the most fire-prone areas, as weather and activity levels dictate;
- Calling back off-duty firefighters to staff reserve equipment, according to State and County agreements;
- And, leasing an Erickson Air-Crane Helitanker and CL-415 Super Scoopers to bolster our aircraft fleet.

This is the time of the year when all our detailed plans and extensive training are put into action. This is when our civic partnerships and mutual aid are brought to bear.



CELEBRATING PROGRESS & TRANSITION

This month, the Department celebrates the one-year anniversary of Camp 17's hybrid fire camp program, jointly operated by the Air and Wildland Division, Forestry Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Probation.

Under the direction of the Board of Supervisors, the Camp 17 Hybrid Fire Camp was initiated in June 2015 in the foothills above La Verne.

Within a year's time, the program has successfully graduated four fire crew training classes and has served as a positive alternative for young men spending time at the juvenile probation camp, Camp Joseph Paige.

Young men voluntarily participate in the program, which focuses on building their physical strength and discipline, and developing their wildland firefighting and forestry skills. Upon graduation,

these young men are available to assist at incidents in non-suppression roles and are paid for their participation.

These young men are given a fighting chance to turn their lives around and continue pursuing job opportunities with the U.S. Forest Service, CAL FIRE and other fire agencies.

Camp 17 is the positive transition from camp life to real life. Congratulations to everyone at Camp 17 for ensuring the program's success!

BUILDING ON OUR FOUNDATION

It has been a lengthy process, but I am very pleased to announce the Board of Supervisors' approval and signed agreement between the Department and the Los Angeles County Fire Department Foundation.

Incorporated in 2015 under the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law, the Foundation is a charitable and educational nonprofit that will work with the Department to create partnerships that provide funding resources for community outreach and emergency preparedness programs, youth programs, training programs, etc.

The Foundation is a valuable extension of our Department that will wholeheartedly provide essential youth and community-based programs. These programs, with support from other County departments and each Supervisorial District, will enhance the County's relationship with its

communities and enrich lives through effective and caring service.

The Foundation's Board of Directors has tremendous plans for it and its program objectives. I look forward to sharing more about the Foundation and all the good and meaningful work it will be doing in the months to come.

THANKS AND MOVING FORWARD

Throughout the month of June, I had the opportunity to observe the incidents we handled and I could not have been more impressed. Through true team spirit, everyone seamlessly worked together and played a critical role in keeping our operations moving—whether you were in a support role or on the front lines.

Each and every member truly proves that our Department is built on strong, courageous individuals who are emboldened by our core values and mission. You care about our communities, this Department and your work here.

As we approach another record-breaking summer, I also want to acknowledge and thank our residents, communities and partnering agencies for their coordinated and sustained efforts to consistently be prepared as we proceed boldly into this year's severe wildfire season.

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